AN

HISTORICAL ACCOUNT

OF THE

Siamese Twin Brothers,

FROM

ACTUAL OBSERVATIONS.

"UNITED WE STAND."

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NEW-YORK:

Elliott & Palmer, Printers, 20 *William-street.*

1831.

ENG and CHANG,

THE CELEBRATED SIAMESE YOUTHS.

Published by the Act direct. Jany 28 1830

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EGYPTIAN HALL, PICCADILLY, Nov. 24th, 1829.

CHANG & ENG.—Two youths born in the kingdom of Siam, whose bodies are, by a wonderful caprice of nature, united together as one, arrived in London on Thursday, Nov. 19th, and on Tuesday 24th, were submitted to the examination of the most eminent professors of Surgery and Medicine of the Metropolis, as well as some other gentlemen of scientific and literary pursuits in order that through their report, (if favourable) the public may be assured that the projected exhibition of these remarkable and interesting youths is in no respect deceptive; and further that there is nothing whatever, offensive to delicacy in the said exhibition.

These Youths have passed their eighteenth year, are in possession of full health and extraordinary bodily strength; display all the faculties of the mind in their fullest extent; and seem in fact in every respect to enjoy a state of perfect happiness and contentment.

*** The Youths having been thus introduced to the British Public, were visited on that day (among many others,) by the following distinguished persons, who testified their entire approbation of the exhibition, and obligingly favoured the Proprietors with the sanction of their names.

(Signed by)

HONs. LEIGH THOMAS, President of the Royal College of Surgeons.

ASTLEY COOPER	J. FLOST	ANTH. CARLISLE
THOMAS COPELAND	WILLIAM BLIZARD	J. MACBRAIRE
R. C. HEADINGTON	JOSEPH H. GREEN	J. D. BROUGHTON
W. B. LYNN	GEORGE LANGSTAFF	J. HARRISON CURTIS
B. C. BRODIE	JAMES LUKE	WILLIAM CLIFT
B. TRAVERS	HENRY HALFORD	JOHN ASHBURNER
CHARLES LOCOCK	J. M. LATHAM	WILLIAM MANNING
FRANCIS HAWKINS	JOHN WEBSTER	EDWARD STANLEY
JAMES A. WILSON	WM. BABINGTON	E. H. PHILLIPS
E. C. THOMAS	J. A. PARIS	HENRY HUNT
W. REID CLANNEY	GEORGE BIRKBECK	JOHN SCOTT, &c.

Having seen and examined the two Siamese Youths, Chang and Eng, I have great pleasure in affirming they constitute a most extraordinary Lusus Naturæ, the first instance I have ever seen of a living double child; they being totally devoid of deception, afford a very interesting spectacle, and they are highly deserving of public patronage. (Signed) *JOSHUA BROOKS.*

The above are from a large number of testimonials, which are open to the inspection of the visiters to the Exhibition in a book kept there for the purpose.

ACCOUNT

OF THE

SIAMESE TWIN BROTHERS.

The kingdom of Siam, from whence these interesting youths were brought, is situated between the Chinese and Burmese empires, and is tributary to the former. Bankok, the capital city of the empire, is in latitude 13° N. and longitude 101° E., on the river Minam, about 40 miles from its mouth. Many of the houses, which are of bamboo, are built upon rafts, and moored in the river in such situations as suit the convenience of the occupiers. There are houses, belonging to the higher classes of people, on shore built of brick, and painted white; that of the King is enclosed within walls about two miles in circumference; his household consists of about three thousand individuals, of whom seven hundred are his wives. The person of the King is considered so sacred, that when he leaves the precincts of the palace, (about twice a year,) the streets are cleared of people, the doors and windows of all buildings closed, and any person found guilty of looking at his most excellent Majesty, is punished with immediate death.

The government of Siam is probably one of the most despotic and cruel in the world. As an instance of the tyranny of the King, it may be mentioned, that during the residence of Capt. Coffin in Bankok, in 1829, he was ordered by his Majesty to witness the punishment preparing for the prince of Laos, who had revolted from his allegiance, and was subsequently taken prisoner. When Capt. Coffin

saw him, he and thirteen of his family were confined in an iron cage, loaded with heavy chains. From thence he was to be taken to the place of execution, and there hung by a hook to be inserted under his chin; he was afterwards to be seated upon sharp pikes five inches long; then to be placed in boiling oil, and finally pounded to pumice in an immense mortar. All these cruelties would doubtless have been consummated, had not the Prince escaped their horrid infliction, by poisoning himself the day before the sentence was to have been carried into execution.

ENG and CHANG,* the young men now brought before the public, are natives of a small village on the sea-coast of Siam, called Maklong, about 60 miles from the capital. They were born in May, 1811, of Chinese parents, and are united to each other by a ligature, or band, about three and an half inches in length and eight in circumference formed at the extremity of the breast bone of each, and extending downwards to the abdomen. The upper part of the band is a strong cartilaginous substance; the lower part is soft and fleshy, and contains a tube or cavity, presumed to be about an inch and an half in circumference. What the contents of this cavity may be, cannot be determined during their lives; I have, however, inserted at the end of the book the opinions of scientific men upon the subject, to which the reader is referred. On the lower edge of the band, exactly in its centre, is situated the umbilicus or navel; (there being but ONE in common between them;) a pressure upon the lower part of the band when they cough, laugh, or sneeze, would cause considerable pain, which would be equally felt by each. If the connecting link be touched in the centre, both are equally sensible to it; but if half an inch from the centre, it is only felt by one. There is nevertheless a considerable degree of nervous

* It may be observed that Eng is always on the right, Chang consequently on the left. Their names are pronounced as if spelt In and Chun.

sympathy between the two bodies, but it is entirely overpowered by the operation of the mind. This was strongly proved at one time by Dr. Roget, secretary to the Royal Society, by means of a galvanic experiment. I am clearly of opinion that there is a degree of muscular power in the band, and that strength is sometimes communicated from one to the other. The flexibility of the cartilage is so great, that they can readily turn those shoulders towards each other, which are outward when walking; indeed there probably would have been no difficulty in their walking either way, had they learned to do so when young. Their mother observed that she suffered no greater inconvenience at their birth, than at those of former children, as they were very small, and the head of one was presented between the legs of the other. She has had a number of other children without any peculiarity, all of whom excepting Chang and Eng, and a brother and sister, are dead. Their father died when they were eight years of age; about the same time they were severely affected with the small pox, and shortly afterwards, the measles; by both these disorders they were equally ill, recovered at the same moment, and by the same remedies. Since that time they have never suffered by any illness, excepting occasionally a slight cough. They have been several months at sea, but never were ill in consequence of it, so as to cause nausea; on the contrary, they were always remarkably well on shipboard, would frequently go aloft, and many times have expressed a wish that they might at some future day command a ship of their own.

Their parents were of the poorer class, and until the youths left their home, they were engaged in fishing, manufacturing cocoanut oil, keeping poultry, &c. for the support of their family. A visitor once asked them what was their occupation in their own country; when they fa-

cetiously answered that they were merchants, having been engaged in the duck and egg trade.

They left Siam on the 1st April, 1829, under the protection of Capt. Abel Coffin, on board the American ship Sachem, which was commanded by him, and who had obtained the consent of their parent and of the government, to their leaving the country. The mother and children were equally pleased with the voyage, as a sufficiency was left for her support, and all were aware of the respectability of those in whose charge they were placed. The youths never express any desire to return to their native country, excepting to visit their friends, after which they hope to pass the remainder of their lives in Europe or America.

They are as near as possible of the same height, about five feet two inches; are finely formed in every respect, and possess a great degree of muscular power for persons of their size. I have known them to carry a person upwards of an hundred feet, whose weight was 280 pounds; and to throw others without any difficulty, whose weight much exceeded theirs, which was on the 1st Jan. 1831, 210 pounds; having gained 40 pounds within a year. They are remarkably agile, can walk or run with great swiftness, and can swim as well as most single persons. Their activity can readily be imagined by those who have seen them playing at battledore and shuttlecock, a game of which they are particularly fond, as combining exercise with recreation. They continue to dress in their native costume, and their hair, which is about four feet in length, is braided in the Chinese style. In doing this, in washing, dressing, or in any other occupation, they require no assistance, each acting for himself with as perfect ease as would an individual.

Their intellectual powers are very acute, and in this

respect it has not been observed that one possesses the slightest degree of superiority over the other. The wisdom of Providence is herein strongly manifested; for did any mental superiority exist, it would necessarily lead to contentions and struggles for pre-eminence, which happily is so far from being the case, that many who have visited them, have left them under the impression that they were actuated by only one mind, so simultaneous were they in all their movements. They play at chess and draughts remarkably well, but never in opposition to each other: having been asked to do it, they replied that no more pleasure would be derived from it, than by playing with the right hand against the left.

They are so conversant with the English language, that they can understand all that is said to them, and converse with tolerable fluency: they are also very desirous to make themselves generally acquainted with the manners and customs of our country.

A volume might be filled by enumerating their shrewdness and keenness of remark; and to mention one or two instances here may not be deemed improper. A visitor once came into the room, who had but one eye; upon which they observed to the door-keeper that the gentleman should have paid only half price for admission, as he had only half the chance to see which others had. On seeing a cripple who had lost both hands and feet, they made him a present, remarking that as they had four hands and he none, it was not only a pleasure, but their duty to assist him.

The ex-king of France, Charles X. once visited them in Liverpool, and on leaving them, made them a present of a piece of gold; after he was gone, they observed that they supposed the reason why he gave them gold, was because he had no crown. Indeed, there are few who visit them, who escape their notice, and they generally amuse

themselves and friends an hour or two in the evening, by relating some of the strange observations they have heard during the day, and in remarks upon those they have seen at the exhibition room.

Their feelings are warm and affectionate, and their conduct amiable and well-regulated. They are very susceptible, and an act of kindness or affectionate treatment of any description is never forgotten, while an injury or insult offered to one is equally resented by the other. They never enter into conversation or discussion with each other, because, possessing as before observed the same quantum of intellect, and having been placed constantly in the same circumstances, precisely the same effects have been produced upon the mind of each; therefore they have not that to communicate which two other beings would have under the common circumstances of distinct observation. It is occasionally observed that a simple remark may be made by one to the other, but I have never known them to enter into conversation with each other. The attempt has been frequently made to engage them in separate conversations with different individuals, but without success, as they are invariably inclined to direct their attentions to the same thing at the same time.

In their movements the most perfect equanimity is observed, the one always concurring with the other so exactly, that they appear as if actuated by one common mind, and it is next to impossible, by the strictest scrutiny to discover with which the impulse originates, whenever they arise of their own accord. In their necessary employments of life, or in their amusements, they have never been known to pass an angry word with each other; and whenever either wishes to pursue any particular course, he immediately follows the bent of his inclinations, without the least intimation by word or motion to the other, who, nevertheless,

readily coincides, and without the slightest hesitation, moves wherever the will of the former may direct. As the one always assents to the movements of the other, and as no words pass between them, it is curious to imagine how such assent is conveyed.

Their appetites are remarkably good, and they are now quite accustomed to, and pleased with, the general living of this country. Their usual beverage is tea, coffee, or water; wine or spirits they seldom taste. Their likings or distastes for particular food are the same precisely; whatever pleases one, gratifies also the other; and any thing unpleasant to one, has the same effect upon the mind of his brother. This remark applies not only to food, but also to persons and things with which they come in contact. They invariably feel hunger and thirst at the same time, and the quantity of food taken by them is as nearly alike as possible.

Both feel the desire to sleep simultaneously, and they always awake at the same moment. I have never yet known one to be sleeping and the other awake at the same time; indeed, when asleep, so great is the nervous sympathy which exists between them, that a touch upon the body of either will awaken both. While in bed, they are not confined to any particular position, but rest on either side, as may best suit their convenience, generally, however, with their faces towards each other. They usually sleep nine or ten hours each night, and quite soundly; when they do feel restless, and desire to vary their position, the one must roll entirely over the other, and they have frequently been observed to do this without either awaking or being apparently disturbed by the change.

Upon the possibility or otherwise of separating them by surgical means, some difference appears in the opinions of scientific men; ninety-nine in an hundred believe it alto-

gether impossible, and all, that it would be an experiment of such risk, as not to be warranted, unless in the event of the death of one; and that is considered as almost an impossibility, in consequence of the strong degree of circulation which is between them. It is, however, to them a very unpleasant subject, and they feel quite averse to have it spoken of. They have often remarked, that they never saw any single person as happy as they are, therefore they have no reason to wish for a change.

The humidity of a northern climate did not at first agree with them, the weather, on their arrival in England, being unceasingly damp and foggy; both, in consequence, were severely affected by colds and coughs, in equal degrees, from which they recovered simultaneously. During the dark and foggy days, they would sometimes take a deadened coal from the grate, and, holding it up, call it the London sun; and the day after their arrival there, it being necessary to have lighted candles in the drawing room at noon, in consequence of the fog and smoke, they went to bed, insisting that it was not possible it could be day-time. Snow they had never seen till they went to England, and on first viewing it, they were much astonished, inquiring whether it was sugar or salt.

The youths arrived in the United States from their native country, in August, 1829; remained in America eight weeks, and embarked for London, where they arrived on the 19th November following. They remained in Great Britain until January, 1831, having travelled upwards of 2500 miles in the kingdom, and received the visits of about 300,000 individuals in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Liverpool, Manchester, Bath, Leeds, York, Sheffield, Bristol, Birmingham, and most of the principal cities and towns in the kingdom. They were honoured by visits from her Majesty, Queen Adelaide, and others of the Royal family,

the foreign ambassadors, nobility, and by most of the philosophers and scientific men of the age.

Having thus, in order to gratify public curiosity, hastily put together a few prominent facts regarding this extraordinary variety in the works of Almighty power, it need scarcely be observed, that the most fastidious female will find nothing in the exhibition to wound her delicate feelings. Ladies of the first rank, both in Europe and America, have visited them daily in great numbers; and of all who have honoured them with their company, none have appeared more gratified than the gentler sex.

Being constantly with them, ladies and gentlemen may feel assured that I shall at all times be happy to give any further information in my power, and that all questions respecting them will be most cheerfully answered.

JAS. W. HALE.

In order to gratify the numerous professional and scientific gentlemen who continually visit the exhibition room, the following remarks are subjoined. The first paper was written by George B. Bolton, Esq., member of the Royal College of Surgeons, &c., London, and who was their constant medical attendant while there. The latter is from a paper by Drs. Mitchill and Anderson, written at the time of their visit to America, in 1829.

Extracts from a paper read before the Royal Society, London, April 1st, 1830, by G. B. Bolton, Esq.

* * * * * * * * "The band of union is formed in the following manner: At the lowest part of the sternum of each boy, the ensiform cartilage is bent upwards and forwards, meeting the other in the middle of the upper part of the band, where moveable joints exist, which admit of vertical as well as lateral motion, each junction appearing to be connected by ligamentous

structures. It is difficult to define precisely where the respective cartilages from each body meet, and whether a slip from one of the cartilages of the false ribs enters into the structure of these parts; but it is certain that the ensiform cartilages have assumed an extended and altered figure. This cartilagenous portion occupies the upper region of the band. The outline of the band is convex above and arched below. Under the cartilage, while they stand in their ordinary posture, are large hernial sacs, opening into each abdomen, and into which, on coughing, congenital herniæ are forced, probably in each boy, formed by a portion of the transverse arch of the colon; generally, however, and under ordinary circumstances, these herniæ are not apparent. Whether there is a communication between the two abdominal cavities, or a distinct peritoneal sac belonging to each hernia, is by no means obvious. * * * * * * * * * * * *

"When these herniæ protrude, their respective contents are pushed forwards as far as the middle of the band. The entire band is covered with common integument; and when the youths face each other, its length at the upper edge is two, and at the lower, not quite four inches. From above, downwards, it is three inches and a quarter, and its greatest thickness is one inch and five eighths. In the centre of the lower part of this band, which presents a thin edge, formed only by skin and cellular substance, there is the cicatrix of a single navel, showing where the umbilical cord or cords had entered, and which, I have no doubt, contained two sets of vessels. Small blood-vessels and nerves must of course traverse the substance of the band. * * * I have had an opportunity of examining a preparation of united female twins, now in the museum of the Royal College of Surgeons in London. The union extends from the lower part of the sternum of each twin to the navel; and there is one umbilical cord common to both. On dissection, the following appearances were observed. The umbilical vein, in its course towards the twins, is divided into two nearly equal sized branches, the division taking place at about one inch and three quarters from the umbilicus; one branch passing upwards in front to the porta of the anterior liver, and the other behind to its proper liver. The

number of arteries are four, two from each fœtus, and are included in the same theca with the umbilical vein as far as the body, retaining the appearance of an ordinary funis."

Extracts from a paper by Drs. Saml. L. Mitchill and Wm. Anderson, of New-York.

* * * * "The ensiform cartilage at the end of each sternum is united to its fellow, and has been in part ossified, forming a hard elastic upper edge to the band which connects these boys. This is convex upward and concave below, becoming the upper boundary of a canal, which is in the band, that communicates with the abdominal cavities of both the youths, from which fact, the canal is necessarily lined by a continuation of the natural peritoneal membrane of the cavities, and the whole of this is covered by common integuments. At about midway in the under edge of the band, is exhibited the cicatrix of an umbilicus, shewing wherein the single cord, but no doubt containing two sets of vessels, entered, for the nourishment of these two children before birth.

"Into the canal of this almost cylindrical band, there is a protrusion of the viscus from the abdomen of its respective boy, upon every effort of coughing or other exercise; and these protrusions, from their particular hardness and size, more at some times than others, we might suppose to be made up of any of the abdominal viscera, as intestine, liver, stomach, or spleen, as each should happen in the various positions of their bodies, to be presented to the openings, since we believe that parts of every abdominal or pelvic viscus, excepting the kidneys, have been found from time to time to enter into the composition of hernial tumours.

"A question has arisen, which has been discussed with some warmth, whether they could be separated with safety. We think they could not; and would barely refer to the experience of Scarpa and Sir Astley Cooper, with whom might be included a host of others, quite familiar to the well-read surgeon, for a decision upon the ill success of the operation for exomphalos. Dionis, you

know, says, in relation to the operation for umbilical hernia, 'that those who have the misfortune to be afflicted with an exomphalos, should rather dispense with a shirt than a well adapted truss;' and Acister says much about the same thing. Sir Astley Cooper has said in hearing of one of the writers in his public lectures more than twenty years ago, 'Gentlemen, I have operated for umbilical hernia once, and shall never do it again;' hinting at the general fatal issue of the operation then in practice, since he had cut into the peritoneal cavity at the umbilicus. Professor Scarpa, the acknowledged distinguished anatomist and surgeon, speaks of the great fatality of the usual operation for exomphalos; and recommends the one, when necessary, which has of late been in practice by Sir Astley Cooper, which consists in dividing the stricture and performing the whole operation without cutting into any part of the hernial sac, or peritoneal membrane, under which circumstances, it has with Sir Astley Cooper been twice successful. Now if such an operation could be practicable, for the liberation of these boys, then it might be deemed advisable, other permissions co-operating; but since any cutting accomplishing their separation, (if our description of their connexion be correct,) would expose the peritoneal cavity, then, in that situation, it would be attended with the most dangerous consequences."